

Williamsburg aftermath

Reagan sheds cowboy image

From Nicholas Ashford, Williamsburg

The Williamsburg summit meeting will be remembered more as a political than an economic success, the imposing show of solidarity towards the Soviet Union on nuclear issues being of more long-term significance than the mixed bag of economic achievements.

It will also be remembered as the occasion when President Reagan emerged as an international leader of stature, finally managing to shed his cowboy image and show that he is capable of mastering the niceties of diplomacy as well as the complexities of the global economy.

It was President Reagan's personal summit from the start and many feared it might turn out to be a disaster. His performance at previous summit meetings had given rise to concern that he might prove himself to be an ineffective chairman this time, easily out-

manoeuvred by the wily Europeans. Instead, there was general praise for the way he had prepared himself for the meeting, and for his chairmanship at the various sessions.

Mr Pierre Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, pronounced the summit an "unqualified success", which is praise indeed coming from a leader who is not usually one of Mr Reagan's most ardent admirers.

Even the French conceded that the US President had proved to be "a very clever player".

In an interview with a group of American and European journalists yesterday, the President said he believed the Geneva negotiations would not get down to brass tacks until the Russians saw that "we are going forward with the scheduled deployment".

He accused the Soviet Union of abusing the years of East-West détente by building up "the greatest military power in the world." However, in a conciliatory gesture, he said that the United States did not want a trade war with the Soviet Union.

The President's outstanding achievement was to persuade the other seven participants to approve a statement on arms control which gave renewed support for the development of American missiles in Western Europe at the end of this year.

Although the proposal to make such a declaration came from Mrs Thatcher, the President had to push hard to ensure its adoption. At one stage he argued that there would be "grinning in the Kremlin" if the summit did not emphasize NATO's willingness to deploy the missile.

His success in persuading the

French and the Japanese to back such statement was seen as particularly significant. Although Mr Reagan was not as successful in getting his own way during the economic discussion, he managed to win agreement on a final declaration which, if not extremely a ringing "message of hope to the world", nevertheless expressed the summit's confident determination to promote recovery and reduce unemployment.

He also succeeded in deflecting some of the criticism directed at high US budget deficits and interest rates, although he had to acknowledge the need for monetary and budget policies that would lower interest rates.

President Reagan was not alone in feeling satisfied with the overall outcome of the summit. All the other leaders have gone home with more credits than debits in their accounting books.

For Mrs Thatcher, not only was her presence at a successful international summit an important public relations boost for her election campaign, but she also had the pleasure of hearing British economic policies singled out for praise.

The statement on security will have strengthened her hand in the debate over nuclear missiles in Britain.

The Japanese succeeded in softening the bitter criticism of their trade policies which had marked previous summits.

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Australians flee homes in the great flood

A farm near Moree, 400 miles from Sydney, hit by floods which, after years of drought, have inundated parts of the Australian states of New South Wales and Queensland.

About 100 people have been evacuated from their homes in the north-west of New South Wales as flood waters from the rain, which has been falling in parts of Queensland for more than a month, sweep south, Tony Duboudin writes.

More people will have to leave their homes when the floods are expected to peak again in two weeks. The second peak could mean some homes will be isolated for up to two months. An emergency service spokesman said more stock was expected to die as animals trapped on high ground ran out of food.

Estimates put the direct losses at \$A256m (about £150m), with an added loss of

\$A440m. Farm authorities in Queensland estimate that the final sheep loss could be 400,000.

"The final cattle loss is probably 10,000 and that could be higher. There has been a severe loss of topsoil and substantial soil erosion", Mr Michael Ahern, the state Minister for Primary Industry, said on Monday.

The heaviness of the rain can

be judged by one town in Queensland, St George, about 200 miles from Brisbane, which received 15 inches in the two weeks ending last Friday. Flood waters at moving into New South Wales, which has been experiencing conditions similar to those in Queensland. Sheep are dying in their thousands because they cannot stand under the weight of up to six gallons of water soaking their fleeces.

Denmark's standing in Nato on the line

From Christopher Follett, Copenhagen

The Danish Parliament goes on summer recess this week in unprecedented disarray over defence policy, after a series of humiliating defeats inflicted on the Conservative-led minority Government by the Social Democratic opposition. Doubt has been cast on Denmark's credibility as a viable member of Nato.

Last week the Folketing (Parliament) passed a controversial motion calling on the Government to press Nato, against its will, to extend the December deadline for US-Soviet negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear force reductions, as well as a total freeze on nuclear strategic arms while talks continue in Geneva.

The resolution also urged the Government to demand that the British and French independent nuclear arsenals be considered as part of Nato's overall nuclear defences in the arms limitation talks with the Russians. The Government, much to its embarrassment, has to comply with the resolution.

"Denmark risks being regarded as a second-class Nato member," Mr Poul Schluter, the

Conservative Prime Minister, said after the debate. "Thirty-four years of Danish political consensus on defence has been shattered."

There has been broad cross-party agreement on defence since the country joined Nato with Norway in 1949, on condition that no nuclear weapons were sited in their territories in peacetime. But since going into opposition last year after eight years in power, the Social Democrats, still the biggest party in Danish politics and basically pro-Nato, have moved increasingly to the left on foreign policy.

Recent parliamentary votes inspired by the opposition have withdrawn Denmark unilaterally from participation in EEC trade sanctions against the Soviet Union over Poland, as well as freezing Denmark's 75m kroner (£5.6m) contribution to the deployment of US Pershing and cruise missiles in five other West European countries at the end of this year, should the Geneva talks fail. The deployment was agreed by all Nato members, including Denmark, in 1979.

Galtieri's honour put on trial

From Andrew Thompson, Buenos Aires

General Galtieri, the former Argentine President, is to be sanctioned by a military tribunal for a serious lack of honour, according to military sources.

The general, who was released at the end of last week after completing a 45-day prison sentence imposed by General Cristóbal Nicolaides, the present army commander, had been called before an honour tribunal, formed at the request of General Mario Menéndez, the Argentine Governor of the Falkland Islands, during the invasion last year, and three other senior generals. These officers held that General Galtieri had acted dishonourably by criticizing them in a public interview.

The honour tribunal, presided over by retired General Eleodoro Sancho Lazoz, has not made its ruling public. Nevertheless, the military sources say that the verdict, that General Galtieri is guilty of a serious lack of honour, is virtually a foregone conclusion.

He was charged under disciplinary procedures contained in decree 1180/83, which was published in the official bulletin on May 24, after his arrest had been ordered. This says that honour tribunals can pass three types of sentence: a sanction for a light lack of honour, a sanction for a serious lack of honour, and disqualification for a most serious lack of honour.

If the tribunal's intermediate sentence against the general is confirmed, under another clause of the decree, the army commander, has the right either to harden or to soften the ruling. The accused also has the right to appeal within 48 hours. The decree also establishes that any officer sanctioned by an honour tribunal cannot be pardoned until 10 years after the ruling. Other military sources, meanwhile, say that the inter-forces commission investigating the conduct of the South Atlantic war, is gradually winding up its work.

The junta will also decide whether the commissions report will be made public.

Euro-poll moved to next June

Brussels - The next direct elections for the European Parliament are to be held in Britain on June 14, 1984 and not on May 17, as had originally been suggested. The change was forced by Parliament, which objected to the May dates put forward by the Council of Ministers earlier this year.

US bases deal

Manila (Reuters) - The Philippines will receive \$900m (£550m) in grants and military sales credits under a revised agreement covering US bases in the country. Government officials declined to say how much the Philippines had originally sought, but Manila newspapers reported it had been asking for up to \$1,500m in economic and military aid.

30 years late

Islamabad (AP) - Shujaat Din, accused of slitting his nine-year-old sister's throat in 1953, has been acquitted of the murder charge after spending 30 years in jail. Granting him his freedom, the district sessions court said no evidence could be heard against him as the witnesses had either died or disappeared.

Hiroshima gift

Rome (Reuters) - The Pope yesterday received a religious picture painted by a victim of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It was presented by a 10-man delegation from Hiroshima headed by Mr Takeshi Araki, the mayor.

Sanctions off

Canberra (Reuters) - Australia yesterday formally lifted sanctions imposed against the Soviet Union in January, 1980, after Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan.

Sludge deluge

Reno, Nevada (Reuters) - Melting snow a 15ft wall of sludge through a packed holiday resort, killing at least one person and destroying seven homes. About some 5,000 holidaymakers were evacuated.

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